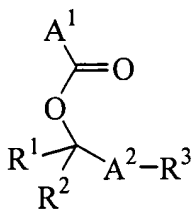


AMENDED SET OF CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) An ester compound having the general formula (1):



(1)

wherein

A¹ is a polymerizable functional group having a carbon-to-carbon double bond,

A² is a divalent group selected from among furandiyl, tetrahydrofurandiyl and oxanorbornanediyl,

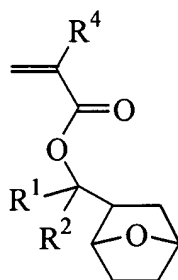
R¹ is a straight, branched or cyclic monovalent hydrocarbon group having $[[1]] \underline{2}$ to 10 carbon atoms,

R² is a straight, branched or cyclic monovalent hydrocarbon group having 2 to 10 carbon atoms, or

R¹ and R² may bond together to form an aliphatic hydrocarbon ring with the carbon atom to which they are bonded, and

R³ is hydrogen or a straight, branched or cyclic monovalent hydrocarbon group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms which may contain a hetero atom.

2. (previously presented) An ester compound having the general formula (2):



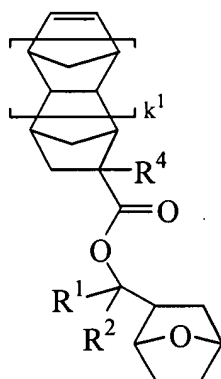
(2)

wherein

R^1 and R^2 are each independently a straight, branched or cyclic monovalent hydrocarbon group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or R^1 and R^2 may bond together to form an aliphatic hydrocarbon ring with the carbon atom to which they are bonded, and

R^4 is hydrogen or methyl.

3. (original) The ester compound of claim 1 having the general formula (3):



(3)

wherein

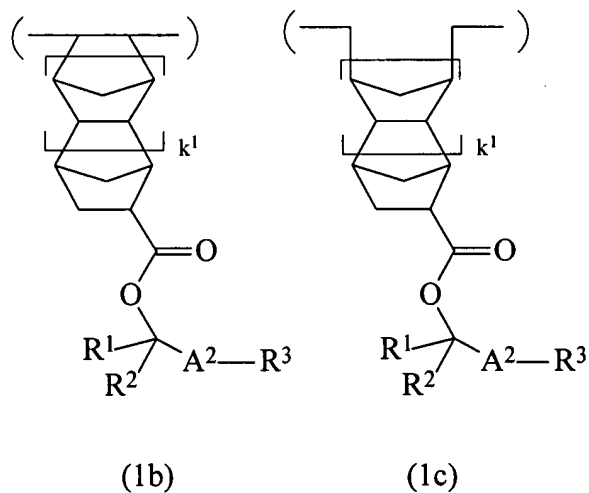
R^1 and R^2 are as defined above,

R^4 is hydrogen or methyl, and

k^1 is 0 or 1.

4. (original) A polymer comprising recurring units derived from the ester compound of claim 1.

5. (currently amended) A polymer comprising recurring units of any one of the general formulae (1b) and (1c):



wherein

A^2 is a divalent group selected from among furandiyl, tetrahydrofurandiyl and oxanorbornanediyl,

R^1 is a straight, branched or cyclic monovalent hydrocarbon group having $[[1]]$ 2 to 10 carbon atoms,

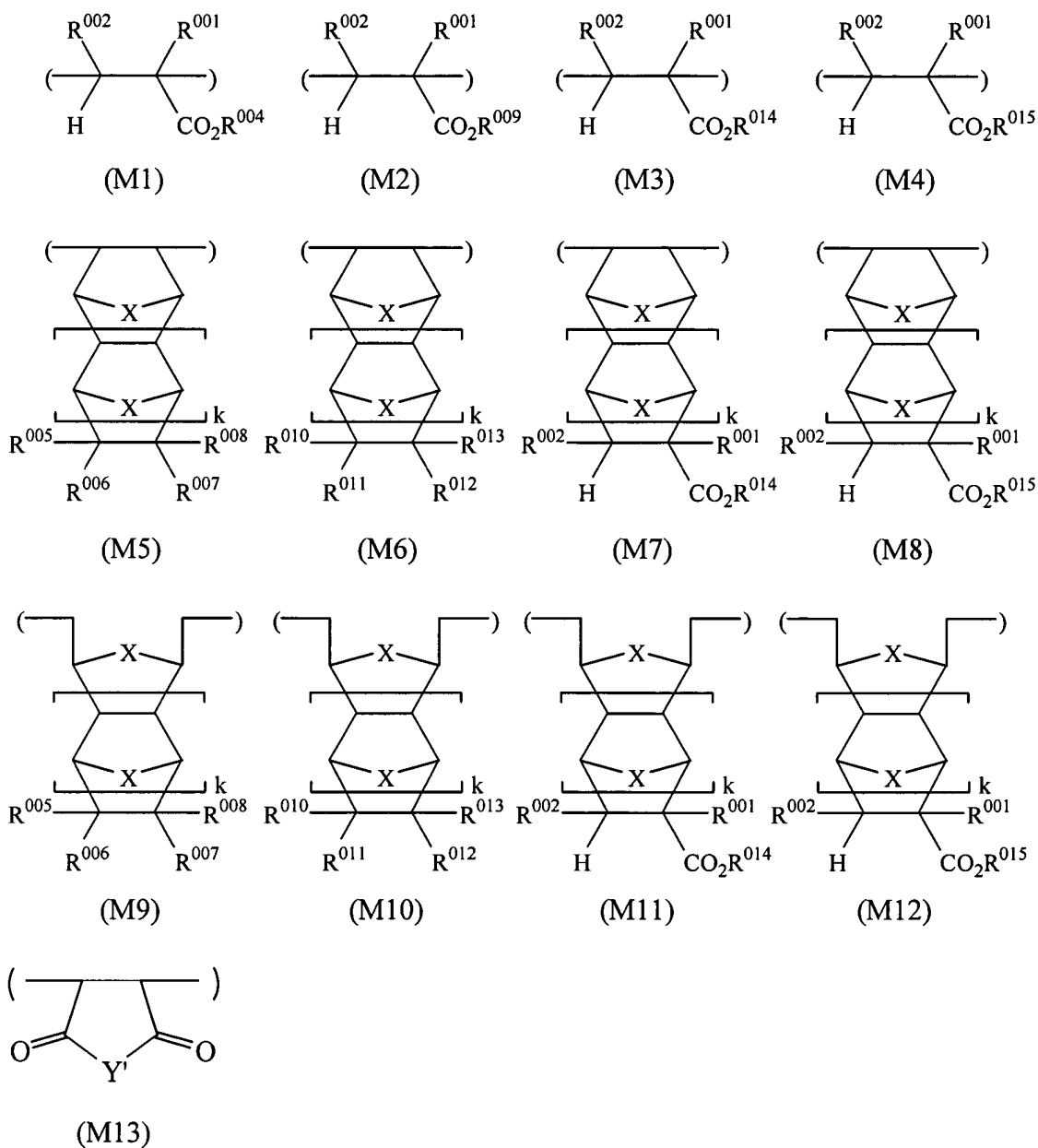
R^2 is a straight, branched or cyclic monovalent hydrocarbon group having 2 to 10 carbon atoms, or

R^1 and R^2 may bond together to form an aliphatic hydrocarbon ring with the carbon atom to which they are bonded,

R^3 is hydrogen or a straight, branched or cyclic monovalent hydrocarbon group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms which may contain a hetero atom, and

k^1 is 0 or 1.

6. (previously presented) The polymer of claim 5, further comprising recurring units of any one of the general formulae (M1) to (M13):



wherein R^{001} is hydrogen, methyl or $\text{CH}_2\text{CO}_2R^{003}$;

R^{002} is hydrogen, methyl or CO_2R^{003} ;

R^{003} is a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms;

R^{004} is hydrogen or a monovalent hydrocarbon group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms having a carboxyl or hydroxyl group;

at least one of R^{005} to R^{008} represents a monovalent hydrocarbon group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms having a carboxyl or hydroxyl group while the remaining R's independently represent hydrogen or a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms, or R^{005} to R^{008} , taken together, may form a ring, and in that event, at least one of R^{005} to R^{008} is a divalent hydrocarbon group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms having a carboxyl or hydroxyl group, while the remaining R's are independently single bonds or straight, branched or cyclic alkylene groups of 1 to 15 carbon atoms;

R^{009} is a monovalent hydrocarbon group of 2 to 15 carbon atoms containing at least one partial structure selected from among ether, aldehyde, ketone, ester, carbonate, acid anhydride, amide and imide;

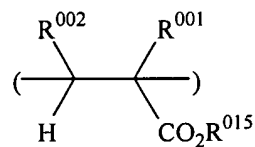
at least one of R^{010} to R^{013} is a monovalent hydrocarbon group of 2 to 15 carbon atoms containing at least one partial structure selected from among ether, aldehyde, ketone, ester, carbonate, acid anhydride, amide and imide, while the remaining R's are independently hydrogen or straight, branched or cyclic alkyl groups of 1 to 15 carbon atoms, or R^{010} to R^{013} , taken together, may form a ring, and in that event, at least one of R^{010} to R^{013} is a divalent hydrocarbon group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms containing at least one partial structure selected from among ether, aldehyde, ketone, ester, carbonate, acid anhydride, amide and imide, while the remaining R's are independently single bonds or straight, branched or cyclic alkylene groups of 1 to 15 carbon atoms;

R^{014} is a polycyclic hydrocarbon group having 7 to 15 carbon atoms or an alkyl group containing a polycyclic hydrocarbon group;

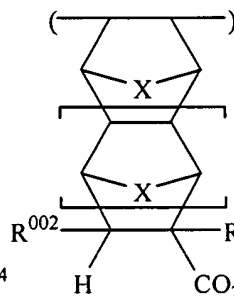
R^{015} is an acid labile group;

X is CH₂ or an oxygen atom or sulfur atom;
Y' is -O- or -(NR^f)-;
R^f is hydrogen atom or a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms;
and
letter k is 0 or 1.

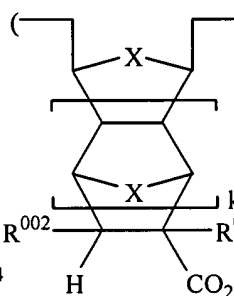
7. (previously presented) A resist composition comprising the polymer of claim 5.
8. (original) A process for forming a resist pattern comprising the steps of:
applying the resist composition of claim 7 onto a substrate to form a coating,
heat treating the coating and then exposing it to high-energy radiation or electron beams
through a photomask, and
optionally heat treating the exposed coating and developing it with a developer.
9. (previously presented) A polymer comprising recurring units derived from the ester
compound of claim 2.
10. (previously presented) The polymer of claim 9, further comprising recurring units of
any one of the general formulae (M1) to (M13):



(M4)



(M8)



(M12)



R⁰⁰⁴ is hydrogen or a monovalent hydrocarbon group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms having a carboxyl or hydroxyl group;

at least one of R^{005} to R^{008} represents a monovalent hydrocarbon group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms having a carboxyl or hydroxyl group while the remaining R's independently represent hydrogen or a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms, or R^{005} to R^{008} , taken together, may form a ring, and in that event, at least one of R^{005} to R^{008} is a divalent hydrocarbon group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms having a carboxyl or hydroxyl group, while the remaining R's are independently single bonds or straight, branched or cyclic alkylene groups of 1 to 15 carbon atoms;

R^{009} is a monovalent hydrocarbon group of 2 to 15 carbon atoms containing at least one partial structure selected from among ether, aldehyde, ketone, ester, carbonate, acid anhydride, amide and imide;

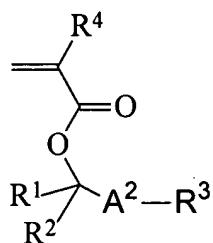
at least one of R^{010} to R^{013} is a monovalent hydrocarbon group of 2 to 15 carbon atoms containing at least one partial structure selected from among ether, aldehyde, ketone, ester, carbonate, acid anhydride, amide and imide, while the remaining R's are independently hydrogen or straight, branched or cyclic alkyl groups of 1 to 15 carbon atoms, or R^{010} to R^{013} , taken together, may form a ring, and in that event, at least one of R^{010} to R^{013} is a divalent hydrocarbon group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms containing at least one partial structure selected from among ether, aldehyde, ketone, ester, carbonate, acid anhydride, amide and imide, while the remaining R's are independently single bonds or straight, branched or cyclic alkylene groups of 1 to 15 carbon atoms;

R^{014} is a polycyclic hydrocarbon group having 7 to 15 carbon atoms or an alkyl group containing a polycyclic hydrocarbon group;

R^{015} is an acid labile group;

X is CH₂ or an oxygen atom or sulfur atom;
 Y' is -O- or -(NR^f)-;
 R^f is hydrogen atom or a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms;
 and
 letter k is 0 or 1.

11. (previously presented) A resist composition comprising the polymer of claim 9.
12. (previously presented) A process for forming a resist pattern comprising the steps of:
 applying the resist composition of claim 11 onto a substrate to form a coating,
 heat treating the coating and then exposing it to high-energy radiation or electron beams
 through a photomask, and
 optionally heat treating the exposed coating and developing it with a developer.
13. (previously presented) An ester compound having the general formula :



wherein

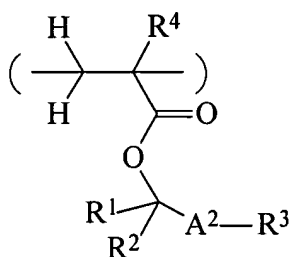
A² is a divalent group selected from among furandiyl, tetrahydrofurandiyl and oxanorbornandiyl,

R^1 and R^2 are each independently a straight, branched or cyclic monovalent hydrocarbon group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or R^1 and R^2 may bond together to form an aliphatic hydrocarbon ring with the carbon atom to which they are bonded,

R^3 is hydrogen or a straight, branched or cyclic monovalent hydrocarbon group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms which may contain a hetero atom, and

R^4 is hydrogen or methyl.

14. (previously presented) A polymer comprising recurring units of the general formula (1a):



(1a)

wherein

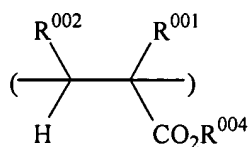
A^2 is a divalent group selected from among furandiyl, tetrahydrofurandiyl and oxanorbornanediyl,

R^1 and R^2 are each independently a straight, branched or cyclic monovalent hydrocarbon group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or R^1 and R^2 may bond together to form an aliphatic hydrocarbon ring with the carbon atom to which they are bonded,

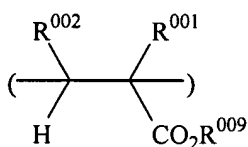
R^3 is hydrogen or a straight, branched or cyclic monovalent hydrocarbon group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms which may contain a hetero atom, and

R^4 is hydrogen or methyl.

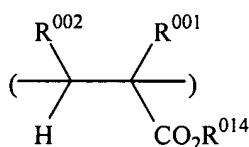
15. (previously presented) The polymer of claim 14, further comprising recurring units of any one of the general formulae (M1) to (M13):



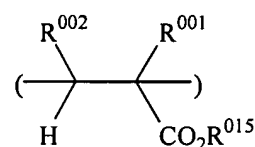
(M1)



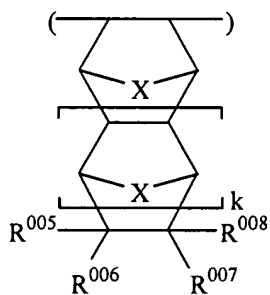
(M2)



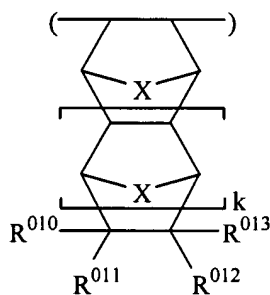
(M3)



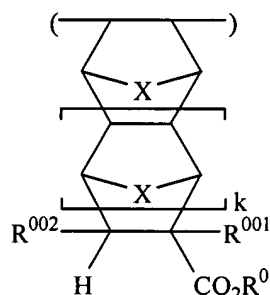
(M4)



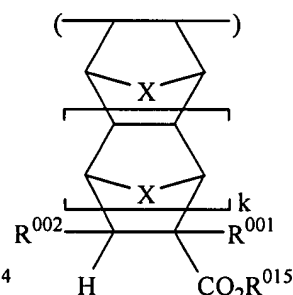
(M5)



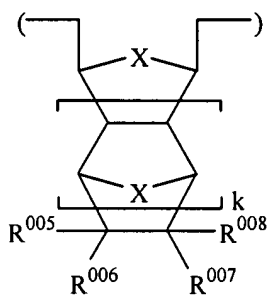
(M6)



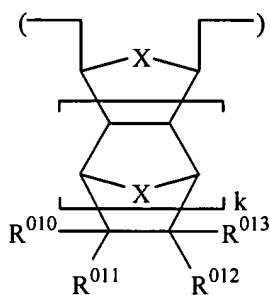
(M7)



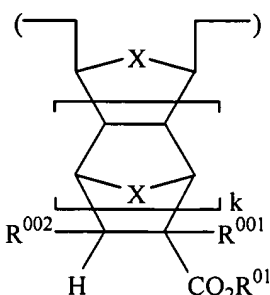
(M8)



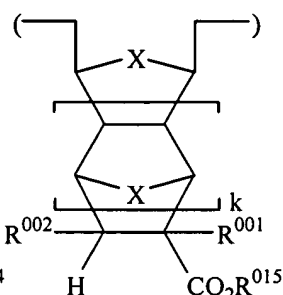
(M9)



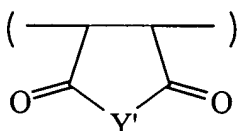
(M10)



(M11)



(M12)



(M13)

wherein R^{001} is hydrogen, methyl or $\text{CH}_2\text{CO}_2R^{003}$;

R^{002} is hydrogen, methyl or CO_2R^{003} ;

R^{003} is a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms;

R^{004} is hydrogen or a monovalent hydrocarbon group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms having a carboxyl or hydroxyl group;

at least one of R^{005} to R^{008} represents a monovalent hydrocarbon group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms having a carboxyl or hydroxyl group while the remaining R's independently represent hydrogen or a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms, or R^{005} to R^{008} , taken together, may form a ring, and in that event, at least one of R^{005} to R^{008} is a divalent hydrocarbon group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms having a carboxyl or hydroxyl group, while the remaining R's are independently single bonds or straight, branched or cyclic alkylene groups of 1 to 15 carbon atoms;

R^{009} is a monovalent hydrocarbon group of 2 to 15 carbon atoms containing at least one partial structure selected from among ether, aldehyde, ketone, ester, carbonate, acid anhydride, amide and imide;

at least one of R^{010} to R^{013} is a monovalent hydrocarbon group of 2 to 15 carbon atoms containing at least one partial structure selected from among ether, aldehyde, ketone, ester, carbonate, acid anhydride, amide and imide, while the remaining R's are independently hydrogen or straight, branched or cyclic alkyl groups of 1 to 15 carbon atoms, or R^{010} to R^{013} , taken together, may form a ring, and in that event, at least one of R^{010} to R^{013} is a divalent hydrocarbon group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms containing at least one partial structure selected from among ether, aldehyde, ketone, ester, carbonate, acid anhydride, amide and imide, while the remaining R's are

independently single bonds or straight, branched or cyclic alkylene groups of 1 to 15 carbon atoms;

R^{014} is a polycyclic hydrocarbon group having 7 to 15 carbon atoms or an alkyl group containing a polycyclic hydrocarbon group;

R^{015} is an acid labile group;

X is CH_2 or an oxygen atom or sulfur atom;

Y' is -O- or $-(NR^f)-$;

R^f is hydrogen atom or a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms;

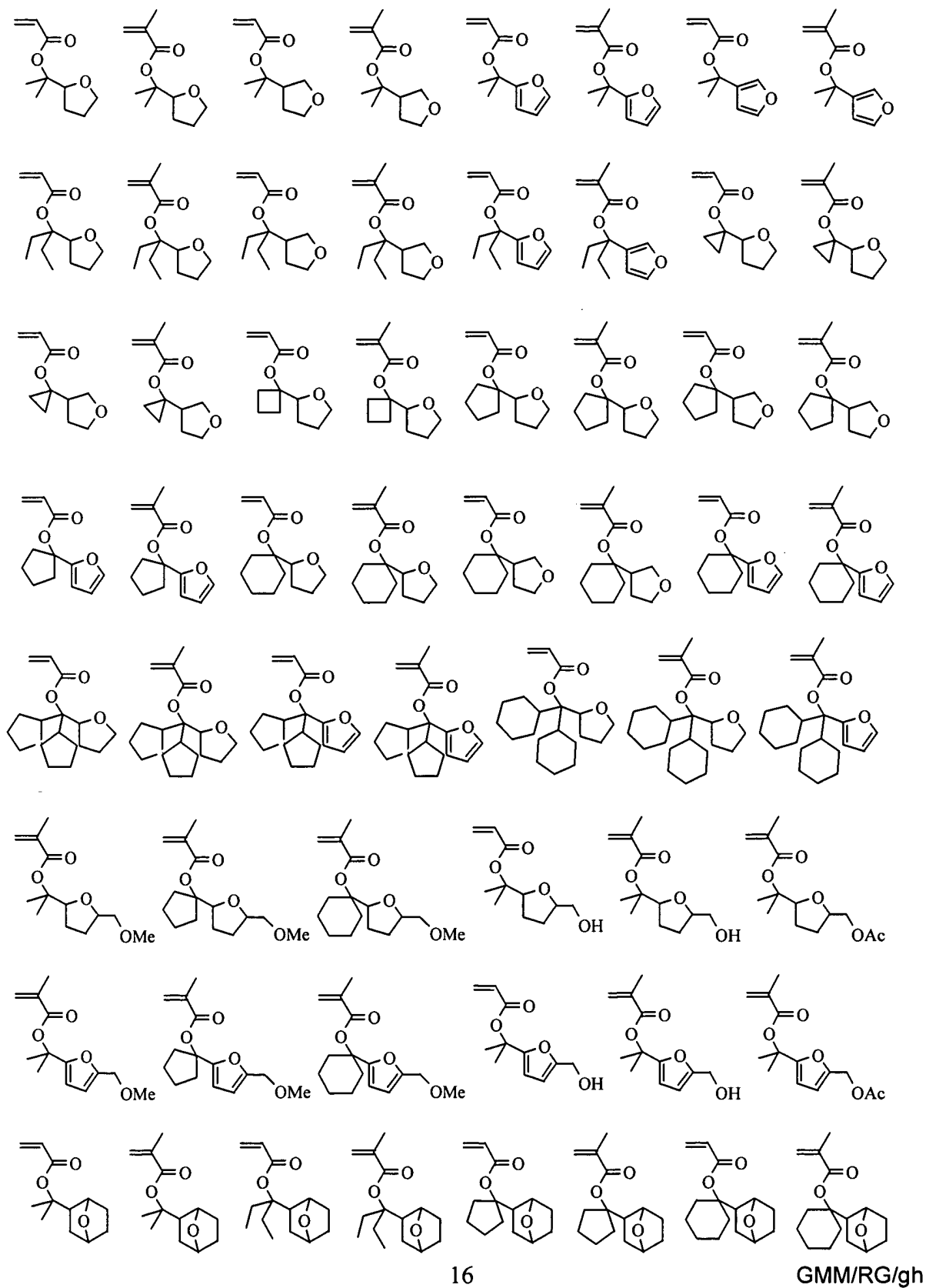
and

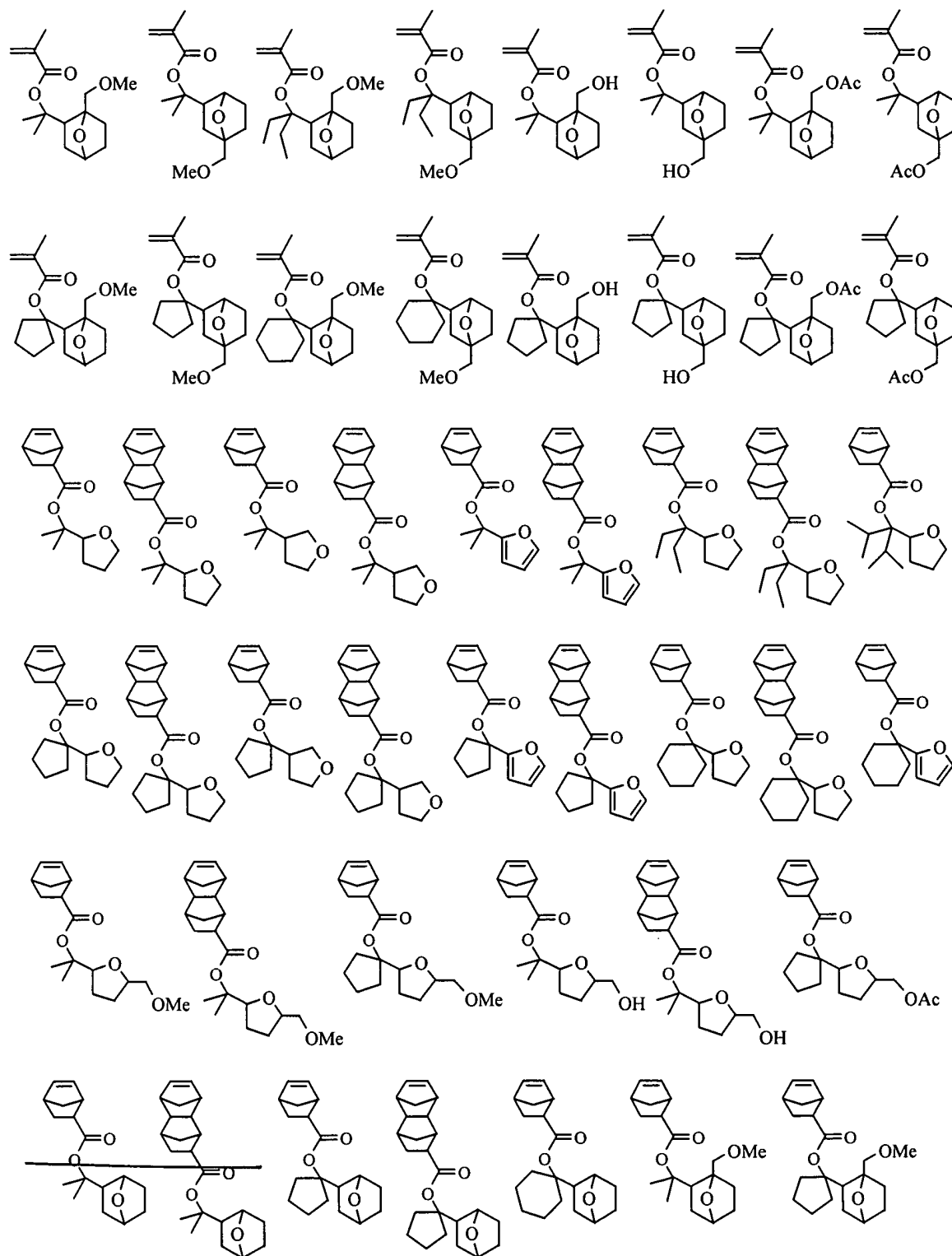
letter k is 0 or 1.

16. (previously presented) A resist composition comprising the polymer of claim 14.

17. (previously presented) A process for forming a resist pattern comprising the steps of:
applying the resist composition of claim 16 onto a substrate to form a coating,
heat treating the coating and then exposing it to high-energy radiation or electron beams through a photomask, and
optionally heat treating the exposed coating and developing it with a developer.

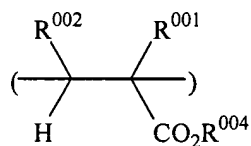
18. (currently amended) An ester compound selected from the group consisting of compounds having any one of the following formulae:



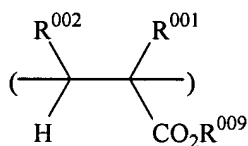


19. (previously presented) A polymer comprising recurring units derived from the ester compound of claim 18.

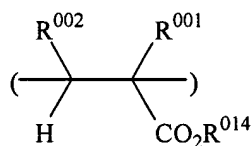
20. (previously presented) The polymer of claim 19, further comprising recurring units of any one of the general formulae (M1) to (M13):



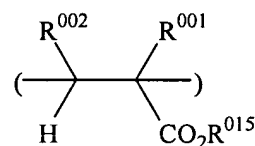
(M1)



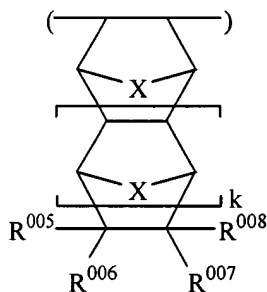
(M2)



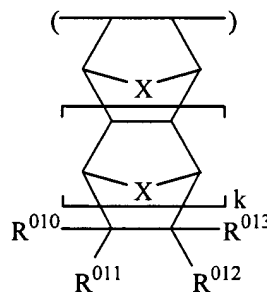
(M3)



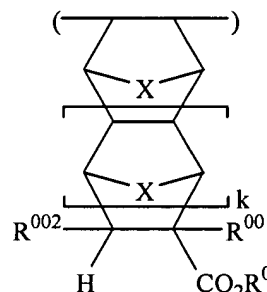
(M4)



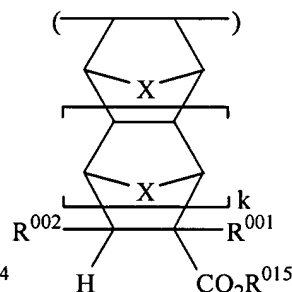
(M5)



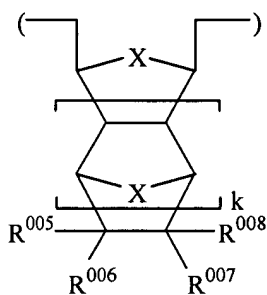
(M6)



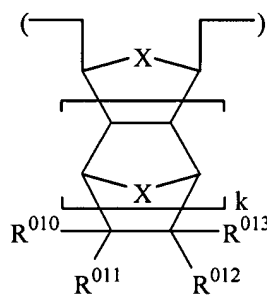
(M7)



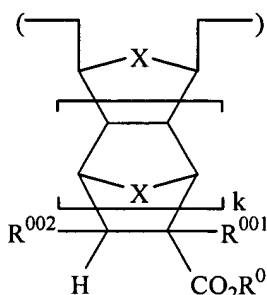
(M8)



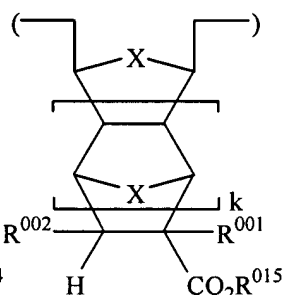
(M9)



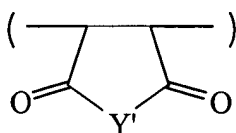
(M10)



(M11)



(M12)



(M13)

wherein R^{001} is hydrogen, methyl or $CH_2CO_2R^{003}$;

R^{002} is hydrogen, methyl or CO_2R^{003} ;

R^{003} is a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms;

R^{004} is hydrogen or a monovalent hydrocarbon group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms having a carboxyl or hydroxyl group;

at least one of R^{005} to R^{008} represents a monovalent hydrocarbon group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms having a carboxyl or hydroxyl group while the remaining R's independently represent hydrogen or a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms, or R^{005} to R^{008} , taken together, may form a ring, and in that event, at least one of R^{005} to R^{008} is a divalent hydrocarbon group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms having a carboxyl or hydroxyl group, while the remaining R's are independently single bonds or straight, branched or cyclic alkylene groups of 1 to 15 carbon atoms;

R^{009} is a monovalent hydrocarbon group of 2 to 15 carbon atoms containing at least one partial structure selected from among ether, aldehyde, ketone, ester, carbonate, acid anhydride, amide and imide;

at least one of R^{010} to R^{013} is a monovalent hydrocarbon group of 2 to 15 carbon atoms containing at least one partial structure selected from among ether, aldehyde, ketone, ester, carbonate, acid anhydride, amide and imide, while the remaining R's are independently hydrogen or straight, branched or cyclic alkyl groups of 1 to 15 carbon atoms, or R^{010} to R^{013} , taken together, may form a ring, and in that event, at least one of R^{010} to R^{013} is a divalent hydrocarbon group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms containing at least one partial structure selected from among ether, aldehyde, ketone, ester, carbonate, acid anhydride, amide and imide, while the remaining R's are

independently single bonds or straight, branched or cyclic alkylene groups of 1 to 15 carbon atoms;

R^{014} is a polycyclic hydrocarbon group having 7 to 15 carbon atoms or an alkyl group containing a polycyclic hydrocarbon group;

R^{015} is an acid labile group;

X is CH_2 or an oxygen atom or sulfur atom;

Y' is -O- or $-(NR^f)-$;

R^f is hydrogen atom or a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms;

and

letter k is 0 or 1.

21. (previously presented) A resist composition comprising the polymer of claim 20.

22. (previously presented) A process for forming a resist pattern comprising the steps of:
applying the resist composition of claim 21 onto a substrate to form a coating,

heat treating the coating and then exposing it to high-energy radiation or electron beams through a photomask, and

optionally heat treating the exposed coating and developing it with a developer.

23. (previously presented) The ester compound of claim 1, wherein R^1 and R^2 bond together to form an aliphatic hydrocarbon ring with the carbon atom to which they are bonded.